

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**Minutes of the 5th Meeting
of the 2003 Interim****October 6, 2003**

The 5th meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Education was held on Monday, October 6, 2003, at 8:30 AM, in the gymnasium of Northern Elementary School. Senator Lindy Casebier, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Lindy Casebier, Co-Chair; Representative Frank Rasche, Co-Chair; Senators Walter Blevins, Alice Kerr, R.J. Palmer II, Dan Seum, Gary Tapp, and Jack Westwood; Representatives Buddy Buckingham, Jon Draud, Ted "Teddy" Edmonds, C.B. Embry Jr., Bill Farmer, Derrick Graham, Mary Harper, Mary Lou Marzian, Charles Miller, Harry Moberly, Russ Mobley, Tom Riner, Charles Siler, Arnold Simpson, Dottie Sims, Jim Thompson, and Charles Walton.

Guests: Representative Ruth Ann Palumbo; Northern Elementary School fifth grade classes; Denera Thomas, Karen Acar, and Ken Jones, Fayette County Public Schools; Angie Tedder and Kathy Louisignont, Fayette County Board of Education; Gene, Wilhoit, Kevin Noland, and Faith Thompson, Kentucky Department of Education; Wayne Young, Kentucky Association of School Administrators; Cindy Heine, Prichard Committee; and Margaret Radford, Northern Parents and Teachers Association.

LRC Staff: Audrey Carr, Jonathan Lowe, Janet Stevens, Sandy Deaton, Kelley McQuerry, and Lisa Moore.

A motion was made to approve the minutes by Senator Kerr and seconded by Representative Rasche. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Senator Casebier thanked the staff at Northern Elementary School for the tour and said it was a wonderful experience for the members. He recognized the fifth grade students in the audience and asked the committee for a round of applause. Senator Casebier invited all of the students to Frankfort to observe the committee during the Session of 2004.

Senator Casebier introduced the panel of speakers. They included: Dr. Kenneth James, Superintendent, Fayette County Public Schools; Ms. Peggy Petrilli, Principal, Northern Elementary School; and Dr. James Cibulka, Dean, College of Education, University of Kentucky.

Ms. Petrilli introduced staff who were available to answer questions. They were: Mr. Doug Adams, Child Guidance Specialist; Ms. Alice Weinberg, Literacy Resource Specialist; Ms. Teresa Davis, Dean of Students; Ms. Lolita Collins, Primary Teacher; Mr. Bill Gatliff, Math Resource Specialist; Ms. Meribeth Gaines, Professional Staff Assistant; Ms. Greta Fowler, Intermediate Teacher; and Ms. Vicki Eizenstat, Intermediate Special Education.

Ms. Petrilli said Northern Elementary had a poor reputation when she started in the Fall of 2000.

She said the School-Based Decision Making Council (SBDM) said she had to change the image of Northern Elementary in the community if she was to become principal. Ms. Petrilli started with the vision that the school could be the best it could be. She wanted students to have opportunities not offered at other schools. She used an accelerated learning model for instructional focus, and said every initiative implemented was carefully thought out and planned, and based on current empirical research to significantly improve student achievement.

Ms. Petrilli said Northern Elementary School has a current enrollment of approximately 480 students, pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. She said the ethnicity is approximately 60 percent African-American, 10 percent Hispanic, and 30 percent Caucasian, with approximately 70 percent of students receiving free and reduced priced lunches.

Ms. Petrilli wanted to use a norm-referenced assessment that measured children across the nation. She said the district mandated the Scholastic Reading Inventory which was a wonderful instrument that normed the students according to standards used across the nation.

Ms. Petrilli said in 1999, 15 percent of all children were reading on or above grade level. She said by May of 2000, 31.9 percent of children were on grade level. Ms. Petrilli said however, in May of 2000, only 11 percent of fifth grade students went to middle school reading on grade level, and only 7.2 percent African-American students were reading on grade level.

Ms. Petrilli said she knew that all children were capable of learning at very high levels including children with disabilities and English as a Second Language (ESL) students. She said the first goal for the school was to improve school-wide discipline and to teach all children to read at high levels. She said the students are told on the first day of school that they will not be allowed to disrupt the learning of others. She said students that do disrupt the classroom are immediately removed from the classroom and go to the in-school suspension room. Meticulous records are kept and students must make up all missed instructional time either after school or in Saturday school. Ms. Petrilli said parents have been fairly supportive of Saturday school because they too want their children to learn at high levels.

Ms. Petrilli said the Literacy First program, based on phonics instruction, phonological awareness (auditory piece of reading), comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary building was implemented at the same time the discipline code was enacted. She said kindergarten children should all be reading by winter break which is the first benchmark that students are expected to meet. The literacy program was made possible through a grant.

Ms. Petrilli said professional development offered to teachers is double the state requirement. She said professional development begins in the summer and it is mandatory. Teachers are expected to implement the strategies and ideas they learn in training. Ms. Petrilli said every Tuesday afternoon is reserved for professional development excluding the third Tuesday of each month.

Ms. Petrilli said that expanded language arts is offered for Early Start students through the fifth grade. She said there was flexible grouping for literacy and math instruction with weekly team meetings to review the data. These meetings include ESL and special education staff. Ms. Petrilli said the Saturday school is also available for tutoring students who are not grasping their lessons.

Ms. Petrilli said collegial coaching is occurring in the school on a daily basis. She said four out of

five school days, a classroom teacher observes a master teacher. Ms. Petrilli said Spanish classes for kindergarten through fifth grade is provided to students two times a week with the goal of conversational language with a literacy focus. Students take violin lessons twice a week from kindergarten through the third grade, piano classes in the third to fifth grades, and trumpet, clarinet, and percussion instruction for fourth and fifth grades. Ms. Petrilli said fourth and fifth grade students sign up for elective classes on Fridays, which include band, orchestra, chorus, dance, advanced art, computers, Spanish club, and drama.

Ms. Petrilli said a dress code was implemented in the Fall of 2001. She said research indicates that students behave better during school with a dress code. Ms. Petrilli said she and staff shopped at the Gap Outlet and other stores in an effort to provide clothing to parents who may not have the money for the dress code clothing. She said 99 percent of the parents support the dress code and comply with it.

Ms. Petrilli said Northern Elementary School was launching a new Discoveries Program for third through fifth grade students. This is a partnership with Transylvania University for enrichment on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Ms. Petrilli said that Northern Elementary School received an Extended School Services (ESS) Innovative Grant in 2000-2001 for \$25,000.00 which provided professional development and training for teachers to write integrated units of study in social studies. She said the Early Reading Incentive Grant (ERIG) was a two-year grant from 2001 – 2003 which supports the school's primary reading initiative. Parents are required to sign daily reading logs for students as well as homework planners.

Ms. Petrilli said she received a grant from the Department of Juvenile Justice/Partners for Youth Grant from 2002–2003 which provided \$65,000.00 to support case management, counseling, community services and Saturday school for identified students. She received another grant from the Department of Juvenile Justice/Partners for Youth Grant for 2003-2004 of \$75,000.00 to continue these services.

Ms. Petrilli said the Elementary and Arts and Foreign Language Immersion Grant in 2003-2004 provides \$48,000.00 for foreign language. This is a state pilot and Northern Elementary School is one of ten sites selected in the state. The original grant award was for \$100,000.00 for two years and included at least one cultural experience for all students. She hopes the legislature will continue these types of grants if she can provide the data supporting improved student achievement.

Ms. Petrilli said the Small Class Size Initiative (Title 2) money is used for classroom teachers. She said no school can be successful without an incredible, passionate staff. She said Northern Elementary School has wonderful teachers dedicated to making students the most well-rounded and well-prepared children in the state of Kentucky.

Dr. James discussed critical areas in education and funding. He praised Ms. Petrilli and the strong leadership that is key to the success of Northern Elementary School. He said some critical focus areas for closing the achievement gap of students include: 1) Focus and funding for early childhood education and literacy development and full-day kindergarten; 2) Reduction of primary class size; 3) Teacher compensation – Kentucky is currently at 95.8 percent of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) state average; 4) teacher quality/site leadership; 5) Focused professional development; and 6) Eliminating unfunded mandates.

Dr. James said recent data indicates the United States will need approximately two million teachers

by 2010, and estimates a one million shortage of teachers across the country. He said there will a high degree of turnover of teachers in the next couple of years because salaries are not keeping pace with other occupations in the private sector. He said local districts need to take charge and attract people to come into the profession of teaching, and offer an adequate compensation package.

Dr. James said teacher quality makes the biggest impact in the classroom. He said high risk schools tend to have the highest teacher turnover. Dr. James said local districts need to find ways to keep high quality teachers in high risk schools by finding new and creative ways of compensating them. He said successful schools also have very strong leadership in their principals.

Dr. James said focused professional development is essential in the areas of reading, literacy, and writing. He said these key component areas are crucial to obtaining the success that communities want and deserve. Dr. James emphasized that every school is looking for a magic bullet to success, but the reality is that intensive, focused effort in the classroom is the only solution to success in student achievement.

Dr. James discussed unfunded mandates and asked the committee to be very careful with legislating new requirements for schools without increasing the school day or school year. He said instruction in schools will suffer if teachers have to keep meeting new requirements without additional planning time.

Dr. James discussed some issues relevant to Fayette County since 1993. They were: 1) Their base guarantee amount has increased by 30.48 percent; 2) the 30 cent local effort has increased by 82.75 percent; 3) the total adjusted Support for Educational Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) allocation has increased by 2.53 percent over ten years; 4) the certified property assessment has increased by 82.75 percent; 5) the general fund working budget has increased by 43.36 percent; 6) the motor vehicle tax collection has increased by 42.46 percent; 7) the occupational license tax collection has increased by 61.45 percent; 8) the utility tax collection has increased by 61.45 percent, and 9) the beginning teacher salary has increased from \$22,802.00 to \$29,170.00 (\$6,268.00), which is a 27.39 percent increase.

Dr. James said Fayette County's 2003-2004 approved budget reflects a \$125,813.00 increase in SEEK funding, and a \$2,265,707.00 increase in local funding. He said in ten years, there has been a shift from the state responsibility via the SEEK formula, to the local taxpayers to provide funding for Fayette County. Dr. James said the \$125,813.00 did not go very far to pay for the mandated salary increases of over \$4,000,000.00 for teachers in a district the size of Fayette County. He applauded the Fayette County community and taxpayers for funding education because they feel it is important.

Dr. James summarized by quoting a recent court case in relation to financing: "Citizens must not finance the schools in a de minimus fashion." He said in essence, regardless of what monetary conditions exist, the obligation is here for the individuals and the state of Kentucky to fund education.

Dr. James applauded Ms. Petrilli and staff for their tremendous work at Northern Elementary School, but said there are many other schools in Fayette County doing wonderful things. He said the success at Northern Elementary can be attributed to focused effort, dedication, strong leadership, and a very strong push for students.

Dr. Cibulka said he wanted to focus on the potential for strengthening partnerships between K-12

schools and higher education. He said Ms. Petrilli is a strong principal with a strong staff, and has done an amazing job in turning around a low performing school. He said she has a clear vision about the ability of all children to learn, created a clear focus on literacy, and used current research. Dr. Cibulka said Ms. Petrilli has used flexible grouping of students based on assessments to provide them with appropriate support. He said she has incorporated music and foreign language into the curriculum, which research has demonstrated improves student achievement. Dr. Cibulka said this type of leadership will take Kentucky where it needs to go in terms of improving the quality of its public school system, and this strategy, if applied more broadly, will greatly narrow the achievement gap.

Dr. Cibulka said a strategy for improving low performing schools is creating a stronger partnership between colleges of education and public schools. He said higher education would traditionally place students in schools without necessarily forming a partnership. He said about 1,200 University of Kentucky (UK) students are placed a year in various schools with a majority being placed in Fayette County. Dr. Cibulka said Northern Elementary School is the type of school where he would like his students to learn because it is an example of what a good school is and what good teaching is.

Dr. Cibulka said it is time for higher education to give something in return to public schools and provide assistance to them. He said Dr. James mentioned focused professional development, and that is what he would like to see provided from UK's College of Education. He has several graduates that are teachers at Northern Elementary, students currently in the program who work directly with students at Northern Elementary, and faculty that serve on a number of intern committees.

Dr. Cibulka said UK is very focused on working with Fayette County Schools, particularly schools with great needs. UK is currently providing assistance and creating a partnership with Bryan Station High School because of student needs.

Dr. Cibulka said there is an important place for higher education in improving the entire K-12 school system. He said UK as a Research I institution, which produces knowledge, and not necessarily just disseminates it, has an obligation to work with schools to help them apply the latest knowledge that UK's faculty are producing. Dr. Cibulka and Dr. James have met and discussed how to work together systemically to help Fayette County Schools narrow and close the student achievement gap.

Representative Farmer asked Ms. Petrilli what percent of her operating budget comes from somewhere other than the traditional funding sources such as the Fayette County School Board, and what would be the impact if the funding was lost. Ms. Petrilli referred the budget question to Mr. Adams. He said the grants such as ESS provide the funding to pay for the additional staff required to teach the extra courses. Ms. Petrilli said if the funding were lost, she would apply for federal grants or think of new, creative fundraising ideas.

Representative Miller asked Ms. Petrilli what her first objective was at Northern Elementary School and if special education student scores were compared with regular student scores. He also asked how a child was determined to be in a special program. Ms. Petrilli said there are a large number of students at Northern Elementary identified with disabilities. She said older children often are just missing a piece of reading instruction from when they were younger, such as phonological awareness. She said once the gaps are identified diagnostically, and the childrens' needs are met, they can learn to read at very high levels. Ms. Petrilli said the 91 percent of students reading on grade level includes special needs children. She believes the reason that the special needs students are reading so well is due to top quality

teachers and receiving direct, systematic instruction every day based on diagnostic data.

Representative Miller asked Ms. Petrilli if the students that the committee saw on the tour were representative of the entire school, or if it excluded the special needs students. Ms. Petrilli said the committee saw the entire student body, which is approximately 480 total, including pre-school children. She said special needs students are fully integrated into the primary classrooms.

Representative Graham asked about the teacher/student ratios. He was surprised by the small numbers he observed in the classrooms. Ms. Petrilli said it is about 16 to 1, but it is lower at some levels. She said in flexible grouping, the children with the most needs have the smallest teacher/student ratios. She said an ideal ratio for primary grade classes is 12-15 to 1, and some classes meet that goal.

Representative Graham asked about separating children that are in Saturday school for behavioral problems from the students who are there for additional tutoring. Ms. Petrilli said all students are mainly together in Saturday school with the exception of a few students with behavioral problems who sit with the Dean of Students. She said there is normally 5 to 10 students per teacher in Saturday school.

Representative Graham asked Ms. Petrilli what the procedure is if a student in third grade is determined to be at a low reading level after completing the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). Ms. Petrilli said her staff knows well before the third grade if a student is having problems with reading as assessments begin in the pre-school years. She said data is collected on children as early as four years old, and each child should know how to read by the end of kindergarten.

Representative Graham asked if all students were allowed to take the Spanish courses. Ms. Petrilli said all students in K-5 take conversational Spanish twice a week. Representative Graham said he is very supportive of this program, however, he is concerned that the students will miss the Spanish teaching in the middle school, and have to wait and receive Spanish instruction in the high school. Ms. Petrilli said she has requested the principals at the middle schools to meet with her this year, and has told them to be prepared to accommodate the bright students headed their way. Dr. James is supportive of the middle schools offering Spanish as well.

Representative Draud said Northern Elementary School has demonstrated to the state of Kentucky that great success can be achieved even overcoming very difficult obstacles. He said adequate funding and strong leaders are a must for schools to achieve this kind of success. He said this type of program could be duplicated throughout the schools of Kentucky, but the schools have never been adequately funded. He asked Ms. Petrilli how these students would suffer if these educational grants are not available in the future, or if education is cut in 2004. Ms. Petrilli said she does not like to entertain the notion of severe, drastic budget cuts, but funding will not stop Northern Elementary School from moving forward. She said they could possibly form a partnership with some business community leaders, but said drastic budget cuts would be devastating, and increase her work.

Senator Blevins commended Dr. James for raising the funds locally because he said the state has not kept its commitment to provide adequate funding for schools. He asked for a round of applause for the fifth grade students in the audience and said they were very well behaved. He said the Northern Elementary School success is inspirational, and believes the Saturday school discipline deterrent is a great idea.

Representative Marzian concurred with Representative Draud that success is obtained through strong leadership and adequate funding. She said that she and Representative Draud introduced a cigarette tax bill with 33 percent of the money earmarked back to education, and 10 percent into the School Facilities and Construction Fund, if this bill is passed. She said the bill is a bi-partisan effort, and is supported by members of both parties in polls across the state. She asked the panel to encourage its constituents, school teachers, and Parent Teacher Association groups to show support for the bill. Representative Marzian said the reality is that it takes money to help the students and teachers, and it is time for Kentucky to put the money behind its schools.

Senator Kerr said she had toured Northern Elementary School back in the spring, and she was so excited, she asked Senator Casebier to bring the entire committee over to the school for a tour. She said that it seems everyone is in agreement that they have seen a successful school model at Northern Elementary School. She asked Dr. James and Ms. Petrilli why the program could not be “cookie cuttered” and replicated across the Commonwealth. Dr. James said the program can be copied, and it should be. He said the school incorporates high stakes accountability and the concept of No Child Left Behind. He said there are many vendors at the education conventions and conferences that have their products on display that ensure a quick fix and tell schools they can fix curriculum problems and accountability overnight, but he says only leadership, high quality teaching, focused professional development, and intensive instruction are the keys to success. He said if these things are occurring, schools may need a management system to check student progress, but that is it. Ms. Petrilli said heart and passion are other key components, and to remember that Northern Elementary School is not a program, but a process that takes a lot of hard work and dedication.

Senator Kerr said Kentucky wants more money for education, but the small class sizes that are in place at Northern Elementary School is because they were creative in utilizing space. She said other schools can have smaller class sizes right now too if they are willing to use all spaces possible. Senator Kerr said principals also have to be wonderful public relations people. She said Ms. Petrilli is everywhere talking to people about Northern Elementary School. She said the community must be more involved, and corporate citizens need to become partners.

Senator Kerr asked Ms. Petrilli about the school uniforms and the money to purchase them. Ms. Petrilli said donations were received and she has even used her own money to purchase these clothes from stores. She said parents also donate clothes that their children have outgrown, and private schools have donated batches of clothes as well. Ms. Petrilli said if a child shows up for school not dressed appropriately, the staff discreetly allows them to change into the clothing provided at the school, and a note is sent home to the parents. She does not want children penalized if the parents did not get the appropriate clothes washed. She also said they have dress down days where children can wear other clothing.

Senator Westwood said some of the Kentucky’s problems and funding issues might go away if there were more leaders who reached out to the community and looked for alternative ways to fund additional programs for schools. He said he is particularly interested in the Reading Incentive Grant for 2001 -2003, and asked Ms. Petrilli if she can apply for a renewal grant. Ms. Petrilli said she hopes to be a demonstration site, and said they will apply for a grant. She said the current grant helps to pay for master reading teachers who serve as mentors to first-year teachers.

Senator Westwood mentioned the grant money, \$1.8 million per year, for the Reading Incentive

Grant is from the Kentucky State Lottery. He would like to see that amount increase. Senator Westwood said Ms. Petrilli is not only helping the children now to learn to succeed in school, but is also heading off future problems by ensuring that all the children learn to read.

Ms. Petrilli thanked Ms. Andrea Coleman, Department of Juvenile Justice Partners For Youth, who shares the same attitude about preventing children from starting out on the wrong track. Ms. Coleman works closely with Ms. Petrilli on efforts for the success of children.

Senator Westwood asked Ms. Petrilli how she is partnering with the Family Resource Centers and what type of role they play. Ms. Petrilli said the Family Resource Center is an integral part of everything that Northern Elementary School does. She said there is a student assistance team lead by Mr. Adams that includes the Department of Justice Partners of Youth and the Family Resource Center who meet weekly to monitor the case management on individual students and families. Ms. Petrilli said the Family Resource Center provides family counseling and other support to students to ensure that their basic, critical needs are met to help them be successful in school. Senator Westwood asked if there was a lot of community support for the Family Resource Center, and Ms. Petrilli said, "Absolutely."

Representative Palumbo thanked Ms. Petrilli for incorporating the art programs because it shows that incorporating the arts into the classroom can improve a student's education. She said she appreciated the special needs children being incorporated into the regular classroom environment as research has proven that students being put all together makes every child learn better, and produces better test results.

Senator Casebier thanked the parents from the Parent Teacher Association for the refreshments provided in the morning. He thanked the members of the committee for their attendance because a picture is worth a thousand words. He expressed regret for Representative Stein who was not in attendance due to a conflict. He also recognized the attendance of Fayette County board members Angie Tedder and Kathy Louisignont.

Senator Casebier said he hoped that members took notice of Mr. Adams frequenting pawn shops to buy instruments. He said it is not the responsibility of corporations or local government to provide funding for schools, it is the sole responsibility of the General Assembly. He hopes that members will step up to the plate in the 2004 legislative session and pass a slots bill so that Kentucky does not continue to build roads and improve schools in Indiana. He said it is not the responsibility for staff members to run out to pawn shops, or use their own money to buy school clothes, and he commended the staff at Northern Elementary School. Senator Casebier mentioned the teacher shortage of 2 million by 2010 that Dr. James referred to earlier. He said people do not want to enter into the profession because salaries are too low. He said, "What could be more important than working with Kentucky's children?". Senator Casebier said he spent fourteen years in the classroom and then entered into administration, and it is not fair to the teachers in the classroom that they are not paid at a level commensurate to an administrator. He said if teachers were paid \$150,000 a year, it would be a justified way to spend the money because Kentucky would not have to worry about building new prisons.

Ms. Petrilli said the teachers at Northern Elementary School spend about \$100 a month of their own money for their classrooms because the school does not have the money to give them. She said the teachers spend about \$1,000 a year after tax dollars and that is a minimum. Dr. James said funding without vision is a hallucination, and commended Senator Casebier for his comments, and said every decision from the board level to the classroom should be made with the students in mind.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. to be followed with a tour of UK beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Committee members visited UK in the afternoon with Representative Mike Cherry and Representative Rick Nelson joining the group. Dr. Lee T. Todd, Jr., President, greeted the group and provided an overview about the campus and programs. The committee then went to the Ralph G. Anderson Building, College of Engineering, and heard from Dr. Bruce L. Walcott, Associate Dean for Economic Development and Innovation Management, on engineering research supporting economic development efforts. The group toured the Visualization Center where they heard from Dr. Herron and Dr. Walcott about Vibro Acoustics Projects. The group visited the Center for Manufacturing in the College of Engineering and watched a brief introduction video on the Lean Manufacturing Program and heard from Mr. Jon C. Yingling, Associate Professor. The group also saw an example of prototyping and stereolithography from UK faculty member, R.J. Robinson.

The committee then traveled by shuttle over to the newly constructed Plant Sciences Building, College of Agriculture where they saw a slide show about the cutting-edge research and treatment methods for Parkinson's Disease by Dr. Greg A. Gerhardt, Professor of Anatomy and Neurobiology, and Neurology, Director for Center for Sensor Technology, and Director for the Morris K. Udall Parkinson's Disease Research Center for Excellence. Dr. Scott Smith, Dean and Director, UK College of Agriculture, welcomed the committee and introduced Dr. Maelor Davies, Director, Kentucky Tobacco Research and Development Center, who presented "Connecting Plant Science Research at UK with the New Economy."

The committee split into two groups. Dr. Joe Chappell, Professor of Agronomy, UK College of Agriculture, gave an overview on "Plant Sciences and the New Economy, including the NSF Natural Products Alliance and Owensboro Biotechnology Alliance." Dr. Mark Farman and Dr. Chris Schardl presented on the "Overview of the Advanced Genetic Technologies Center."

The tour concluded at 3:50 p.m.